UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Housekeeper's Chat Tuesday, August 26, 1930.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Keeping Floors in Order." Information based on Farmers' Bulletin 1219-F, Floors and Floor Coverings. Approved by Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletin available: "Floors and Floor Coverings."

--ooOoo--

What is it about a bride that always betrays her state of inexperience? I have another question in my box which comes, I am certain, from a housekeeper of very short acquaintance with pots and pans and cleaning methods.

Uncle Ebenezer says we are supersensitive in Washington on the subject of newly-weds, they are so prevalent. Washington seems to be a veritable Mecca for sight-seers of all kinds, and fully half the young women that walk our streets clinging trustfully to the sturdy arms of their escorts have new shoes on. Yes sir, that's a dead give-away, as Billy would say. Now if I were a bride, I'd wear old shoes on my honeymoon - at least I think I would. Not only to throw off suspicion - but to be comfortable. Even then, I'd probably do something unconsciously that would make the public turn around and smile.

And speaking of smiling, did you ever happen to hear of the impecunious young man who was being married? When the minister reached the part where he says "With all my worldly goods I thee endow," the bridegroom's father was overheard saying, "There goes Bob's typewriter!"

To come back to my young correspondent. She writes:

"My waxed floors look grimy. How shall I clean them? Or shall I just oil them?"

There she goes- betraying herself. For any experienced housewife knows that waxed floors should never be oiled. Oil just softens up the wax and makes it much more ready to absorb dust and dirt. A hard coating of wax, well polished, is intended to shed dust and enable the homemaker to care for the floor with a minimum of trouble. However, the floor will eventually get dull looking because of the film of dirt that settles on any floor surface.

It may be removed to a large extent from a waxed floor with a cloth wrung out of warm soapy water. Better still is treatment with a cloth moistened with gasoline or turpentine. Remember, though, that both of these substances are very inflammable. Do not use them in a room with an open fire or a lighted lamp or candle. After the dirty coating has been removed, apply a little more wax, and rub it in well with a woolen cloth or a weighted brush. Be careful, however, not to apply too much wax.

For daily care, waxed floors should be swept with a soft brush or "push broom" or a dusting mop entirely free from oil. Under moderate usage they need rewaxing only two or three times a year.

Varnished floors are managed a little differently. After sweeping them with a soft brush, dust mop, or a broom covered with a cotton-flannel bag, they may be rubbed with a cloth or mop slightly moistened with floor oil or kerosene. The oil gradually dried out of varnish after it has been applied to wood, and unless restored by an occasional rubbing with an oiled cloth, the varnish becomes exceedingly hard and brittle. Don't use much oil, however, for if any remains it will catch dust and darken the wood.

In general, varnished floors retain their color and luster better if no water is used on them, but if very dirty they may be wiped with a cloth or mop wrung out of warm soapy water and wiped dry at once. Then they must be polished with an oiled cloth or mop. The polishing cloth will usually remove any white spots made by water or light scratches.

Unfinished wood floors are much harder to keep clean than varnished or waxed floor surfaces. I could tell you what to do for them, but my instinct for efficiency in the home would prompt me to say "paint or varnish them" so they can be more easily cared for. There is an excellent publication on the Department of Agriculture list, called "Floors and Floor Coverings" which will tell you a good deal more about the care of floors of different kinds.

I was especially interested in the explanation, in this bulletin, of the difference between one kind of carpet or rug weave and another. Haven't you sometimes been puzzled to know which was "Wilton", "Brussels", "Axminster" and so on, and which would be the best choice for different rooms? This is all in the bulletin.

Linoleum is one of the best and most serviceable of all floor coverings in kitchens, pantries, and bathrooms. It is made from ground cork, oxidized linseed oil, and various gums, mixed into a plastic mass and pressed onto a backing of jute burlap.

The three different kinds of linoleum you find offered for sale - plain, inlaid, and printed, result from the method of manufacture. The plain, as the name implies, has no design. Coloring matter is mixed with the other materials before they are applied to the burlap backing. This kind of linoleum gives the floor an unobtrusive flat appearance that is restful and pleasing. Good grades of plain linoleum are extremely durable.

Inlaid linoleum is made so that the color in each part of the design extends to the backing. Examine the edge and you can see whether a given piece is inlaid or pointed. If the latter, it has simply been stamped with a design in oil paint on a thin grade of plain colored linoleum. A great variety of color and design is possible in printed linoleum, but as the design is only on the surface, printed linoleums cannot be expected to give such long service as inlaid.

Many people think it is a protection to linoleum and also an aid in keeping it clean, to give it a coat of clear varnish. This is especially useful in the kitchen and bathroom. It sometimes pays to use a rubber or linoleum foot mat over a linoleum floor covering at places where there is much standing, as in front of the sink or stove. Casters on heavy furniture will cut into linoleum. They should be replaced by glass or metal shoes.

In buying linoleum, remember that the price quoted is for a square yard, not a yard across the entire piece, which is 72 inches wide. It is usually best to have linoleum laid by someone from the place where it was bought, although there is an extra charge for so doing.

So much for this time. Tomorrow I'll have a special children's menu to give you, and a recipe.

Wednesday: "Bobby's First Trousers."

###